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1. A method for managing connection requests to a pool of servers identified by a given URL, comprising the steps of:

5 in response to a connection request from a given client machine that initiates a session, associating a session identifier with a given server in the pool;

using the session identifier to redirect the connection request to the given server; and

10 during the session, redirecting to the given server any additional connection requests from the given client machine.

2. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the step of using the session identifier includes generating a virtual URL.

3. The method as described in Claim 2 wherein the virtual URL comprises a URL in the connection request
20 modified to include the session identifier.

4. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the session identifier is incorporated in data returned from the given server to the client machine.

5. The method as described in Claim 1 further including the step of:

in response to a connection request from the given client machine that terminates the session, inactivating the session identifier.

6. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the given client machine includes a browser.

7. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein each of the servers in the pool supports a similar set of objects.

8. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the session identifier is associated with a given server as a function of a load balancing protocol.

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9. A method for managing connection requests to a pool of servers, comprising the steps of:

responsive to connection requests from client machines that initiate user sessions, associating each user session
5 originating from a client machine with a given server in the pool in accordance with a load balancing protocol; and
during the user session, redirecting to the given server any additional connection requests originating from the client machine.

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10. The method as described in Claim 9 wherein the associating step comprises:

generating a virtual URL by modifying a given URL to include a session identifier;

15 using the virtual URL to redirect the connection request to the given server.

11. The method as described in Claim 10 further including the step of:

20 inactivating the virtual URL upon completion of the user session.

12. The method as described in Claim 10 wherein all data returned from given server to the client machine
25 includes the session identifier.

13. The method as described in Claim 9 wherein each of the servers in the pool supports a similar set of given objects.

5 14. The method as described in Claim 9 wherein each client machine includes a Web browser. ✓

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15. A computer program product in a computer-readable medium for managing connections requests to a pool of servers, comprising:

means responsive to connection requests from client
5 machines that initiate user sessions for associating each user session originating from a client machine with a given server in the pool in accordance with a load balancing protocol; and

means operative during each user session for
10 redirecting to the given server any additional connection requests originating from the client machine.

16. The computer program product as described in Claim
15 wherein the associating means comprises:

15 means for generating a virtual URL by modifying a given URL to include a session identifier; and

means for redirecting a given connection request to the given server using the virtual URL.

20 17. The computer program product as described in Claim
16 further including:

means for inactivating the virtual URL upon completion of the user session.

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18. A server for managing a pool of servers at a Web site identified by a given URL, comprising:

a processor;

5 an operating system;

a load balancing routine; and

a redirector routine for managing HTTP connection requests to the Web site, comprising:

10 means responsive to connection requests from client machines that initiate user sessions for associating each user session originating from a client machine with a given server in the pool in accordance with the load balancing routine; and

15 means operative during each user session for redirecting to the given server any additional connection requests originating from the client machine.

19. The server as described in Claim 18 wherein the means for associating comprises:

means for generating a virtual URL by modifying the given URL to include a session identifier; and

means for redirecting a given connection request to the given server using the virtual URL.

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20. The server as described in Claim 19 wherein the redirector further includes:

means for inactivating the virtual URL upon completion of the user session.

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21. A method of managing a pool of servers at a Web
site identified by a given URL, comprising the steps of:
responsive to connection requests from client machines
that initiate user sessions, associating each user session
5 originating from a client machine with a server in the pool;
distributing the user sessions across the pool of
servers according to a load balancing protocol; and
during a given user session initiated from a given
client machine, serving content to the given client machine
10 only from its associated server.

22. A method of managing a pool of servers at a Web site identified by a given URL, comprising the steps of:

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5 during each user session initiated from a given client machine, temporarily redirecting all connection requests originating from the client machine to a given server in the pool; and

distributing the user sessions across the pool of servers according to a load balancing protocol.